Evaluation of the Music Seminar Initiative 2011

Following the final night of the Music Seminars on Tuesday 24th May, it is important to reflect on the success of the initiative. Students and staff from visiting schools completed an evaluation of the series prior to departing.

In addition to the music students from Saint Kentigern College, three other Colleges accepted our invitation to the three nights of seminars. These were Kings College, Baradene and Pakuranga College, along with some individual students from St Cuthbert’s College for Girls. The presenters were well received and results pertaining to the student’s reflections on each performer correlated closely with their own interests in music. Gareth Farr, the composer, was inspiring and students stayed long after the evening finished to discuss his work with him.

Of note in the students’ evaluation were the results for “students who would return next year if the series was offered”, 34 students of the 37 who filled in the evaluation would return. One student did not complete the evaluation and two others noted they would be at university, so they wouldn’t. Over 75% of the students felt the presentations were effectively communicated and were appropriately aimed at their ability level. The most common descriptor used by students when asked to comment on the seminars overall was “awesome”.

In regard to our objectives for this initiative, we have provided an opportunity for the gifted and passionate music lovers at Saint Kentigern College to meet and hear music industry professionals. Thus we have exposed our gifted and passionate students to quality discussion and different perspectives from music specialists. To what degree we were able to aid the scholarship students is difficult to quantify, however, the experience will build on a strong scholarship music programme already in place.

Points for consideration if we were to repeat a seminar series like this in the future, as detailed by the student responses are:

* Starting earlier in the evening, such as 6.30, some question answer sessions ran to nearly 9.30pm after the main presentations.
* Information packs to be developed to support student knowledge of the presenter and their key ideas.
* Caterer Nicola Hudson did a great job, students loved the food, though a few wanted more hot food despite catering for 4 -5 pieces per student.

The overall cost for presenters and catering across the three evenings was $2645.40. This means that the project was kept well within the $5000 approved budget for the music seminar initiative.